

Regional Customs in Japan and Regional Identity in Germany: From the Dual Structure Model to Comparative Socio-Economic History

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Regional Customs in Japan and Regional Identity in Germany: From the Dual Structure Model to Comparative Socio-Economic History.

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INTRODUCTION

The culture of Japan varies by region, the most noticeable difference being between eastern and western Japan. The dual structure model of Japanese origins based mainly on biological data (Hanihara 1991) suggests that the present-day people of Japan are a mixture which began during the Yayoi Period in the third century B.C., that in the Japanese of two lineages, which coexist from the prehistoric time, one was formed by the native Jomonese and the other by the Yayoi immigrants. These two elements characterize the regional differences of Japan. The dual structure model suggests that the Japanese regionalism is characterized mainly by regional customs, which originated from the long-term historical process resulting from the intermixture of the two populations.

German culture varies also by region, due to the migration history of German tribes from the fifth century. German people recognize the north-south and west-east cultural differences, but they emphasize regional identities of Franken, Schwaben, Bayern, Sachsen etc. In Germany the migration ended in the later half of the tenth century. At that time there were no Germans in Europe, but the Franken, the Bayern, the Sachsen, etc., existed as *gentes* or *nationes*. These German clans were the basis for the regional differences in Germany. But since the tenth century the policies of King Heinrich I. and the Emperor Otto I. unified the clans as *Teutonici* or *Allemanni*. The *Teutonici*, the Germans, had at that time only a political identity as an aristocratic union.

Germany also had a dual structure, but a different one. In the Middle Ages the dual structure of Germany was of social nature. It consisted of two societies, one a small aristocratic society and the other a large peasant one. The former initiated German and regional unification, and the latter retained differences of everyday life. Later the German tribes established territorial states. And in the later half of the nineteenth century, they were unified into a German nation-

state. But the basic regional structure persisted through German history and is still present today.

Such a social structure existed also in Japan. But Japanese history developed otherwise. The problem lies in the development of regional identity. The present study investigates regional diversity of inheritance customs and its relationship to the age of marriage. Age of marriage is an important issue in family, population and socio-economic history, and also in social anthropology. It is worth examining for our purpose, because, on the one hand, age of marriage is an important factor in the regional economic-demographic system: particularly women's age of first marriage determines fertility by the number of births, regardless of the presence or absence of birth control. It also interacts with issues of regional family and inheritance customs (Hayami, 1988; Emori, 1995).

HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS

Table 1 shows the ratio of marriage in different districts of Japan for men aged 28 *sai* and for women aged 23 *sai* ("Traditionally in Japan, age was counted in the following manner: one *sai* at birth and another *sai* at each new calender year. A person born in the last month of a year was considered two years (*sai*) old by the next month, i.e., the first month of the next year.") The results are calculated by Hayami from the data of the Table of Households and Population of Imperial Japan (Nihon Teikoku Minseki Kokohyo), which was first compiled in 1886 (Hayami, 1987).

It is shown in Table 1 that the higher rate of marriage can be found in the

Table 1 Proportion of marrying by district in Japan(1886)

DISTRICT	Men(age at 28 sai)			Women(age at 23 sai)		
	population	marrying	proportion	population	marrying	proportion
HOKKAIDO	1604	715	44.6	1932	856	44.3
TOHOKU	32008	21352	66.7	35055	24080	68.7
KANTO	46781	28615	61.2	55350	31511	56.9
1 North-eastern	78789	49967	63.4	90405	55591	61.5
HOKURIKU	25458	13385	52.6	29153	16640	57.1
CHUBU	41226	22858	55.4	47862	26893	56.2
KINKI	40119	17931	44.7	45361	18574	40.9
2 Central	106803	54174	50.7	122376	62107	50.8
CHUGOKU	33946	16064	47.3	35699	17464	48.9
SHIKOKU	22690	11084	48.8	23574	11503	48.8
KYUSYU	43913	21866	49.8	53767	24575	45.7
3 South-western	100549	49014	48.7	113040	53542	47.4
TOTAL	287745	153870	53.5	327753	172096	52.5

Source: Hayami, 1987, 64

Table 2 Mean age at first marriage in the Tokugawa villages

	Province	Village name	Year	Men(<i>sai</i>)	Women(<i>sai</i>)
1 North-eastern	Mutsu	1 Shimoaburada	1737-1870	19.6	15.6
		2 Ohkago	1790-1870	22.4	18.8
		3 Shimomoriya	1726-1872	17.8	14.3
		4 Niita	1726-1870	19.6	15.0
	Kozuke	5 Goryo	1751-1868	24.1	17.1
	Musashi	6 Kabutoyama	1791-1871	25.5	18.3
		7 Ohmiyago	1771-1848	25.7	19.6
2 Central	Echizen	1 Shimoshinjo	1828-1870	26.8	20.4
	Mino	2 Yufunezawa	1701-1796	27.0	20.2
		3 Asakusanaka	1716-1830	27.1	19.6
		4 Kandoshinden	1778-1871	26.4	20.5
	Owari	5 Nishijo	1773-1869	28.2	22.1
3 South-western	Mimasaka	1 Hani	1816-1866	25.2	22.5
	Nagato	2 Shibuki	1826-1871	28.5	22.7

Note: This table is a simplified version of a more precisely described table in Murayama(1998). See also Saito(1985), p.199.

Sources except Nishijo, Niita and Hani: Hayami and Kito(1989)

Niita: Narimatsu(1992), Nishijo: Hayami(1988) and Hani: my own provisional Data

north-eastern part of Japan, and in the central and south-western parts, this ratio is low in average. Hokkaido, where the population was rapidly growing due to immigration in the late nineteenth century, was also an area with lower marriage rates. The average age of marriage cannot be calculated directly from this data, but, "if the rate of marriage at various ages is known, the age that corresponds to half of the highest marriage rate is approximately equal to the average age at marriage"(Hayami, 1987, 63). From Table 1 it is possible to say that there were two patterns of marriage in Japan in the late nineteenth century - a pattern of early marriage in north-eastern Japan, especially in Tohoku district and one of late marriage in central and south-western Japan (Hayami, 1987, 70).

We have comparable data of some villages in both Germany and Japan. The Japanese case in Table 2 shows the same trend as mentioned above. Table 3 shows average age at first marriage for men and women in 17 German villages. It is clear that the age at first marriage for both men and women in almost all the sample villages fall within the range of European late marriage (Haynal, 1965; 1983). As in most of western and northern Europe, marriage occurred relatively late in Germany during the premodern age. Men married on the average around 28 or 29, with exceptions of the Bavarian villages, especially Kreuth, where initial entry into marital unions began at even later ages, and the village of Friesland, Stollhamm, at some earlier ages. On the average, women entered their first mar-

Table 3 Mean age at first marriage for men and women of German villages

	Province	Village name	Year	Men	Women
1 Northern	Ostfriesland	1 Werdum	1700-1899	29.6	25.7
		2 Middels	1700-1899	28.8	23.9
		3 Stollhamm	1700-1820	26.9	22.7
	Schleswig-Holstein	4 Leezen	1720-1870	29.1	25.9
	Osnabrueck	5 Belm	1651-1860	28.8	26.5
2 Central	Waldeck	1 Braunsen	1700-1899	28.7	25.6
		2 Hoeringhausen	1700-1899	29.3	26.9
		3 Massenhausen	1700-1899	28.4	27.1
		4 Vasbeck	1700-1899	27.9	26.2
3 Southern	Baden	1 Grafenhausen	1700-1899	27.8	25.8
		2 Herbolzheim	1700-1899	28.2	26.0
		3 Kappel	1700-1899	27.7	25.6
		4 Rust	1700-1899	28.1	26.1
	Wuerttemberg	5 Oeschelbronn	1700-1899	27.8	26.0
	Bayern	6 Gabelbach	1700-1899	30.1	28.5
		7 Anhausen	1700-1899	30.8	28.5
		8 Kreuth	1700-1899	34.7	31.2

Sources except Stollham, Leezen and Belm: Knodel(1988)
Leezen: Gehrmann(1984) , Stollham: Norden(1984) and Belm: Schlumbohm(1994a)

age	Japan North-eastern Mutsu(4)/Koz.(1)/ Musa.(2)		Central Echizen(1)/Mino(2)/ Owari(1)		Southwestern Mimasaka(1)/ Nagago(1)		West Germany (1800-1899) Northern Ostfr.(3)/Holst.(1)/ Osnab.(1)		Central Waldeck(4)		Southern Bad.(4)/Wuertt.(1)/ Bay.(3)	
	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women	men	women
14.0-14.9		3										
15.0-15.9		1.4										
16.0-16.9												
17.0-17.9	3	5										
18.0-18.9		2.6										
19.0-19.9	1.4	7										
20.0-20.9				3								
21.0-21.9				1.2.4								
22.0-22.9	2			5		1.2		3				
23.0-23.9								2				
24.0-24.9	5											
25.0-25.9	6.7				1		1.4		1		1.3	
26.0-26.9			1.4				3	5	2.4		2.4.5	
27.0-27.9			2.3						3		1.3	
28.0-28.9			5		2		2.5		1.3		2.4.5	6.7
29.0-29.9							1.4		2			
30.0-30.9											6.7	
31.0-31.9												8
32.0-32.9												
33.0-33.9												
34.0-34.9											8	

Note: The numbers correspond to those of Table 2 and 3.

Fig. 1 Mean age at first marriage in Japanese and German villages (18th and 19th century)

riage one to three years younger than their husbands. Their age at first marriage was generally around 26. The exceptions are two villages in Ostfriesland, Middels and Stollhamm, where women were much younger at first marriage, and the villages in Bavaria (Bayern), again especially Kreuth, where noticeably older.

In Kreuth, age at first marriage was even later than in others. Kreuth is located in the Alpine area of Upper Bavaria, where "it frequently suffered during wars, particularly those between Austria and Bavaria". And "there were also disturbances during the Napoleonic Wars", because this village "was situated on a route through which considerable traffic passed" (Knodel, 1988, 513). It is interesting that these social circumstances resulted in high ages at marriage.

The high age at marriage (25-30) for women, the intentional delay of marriage was in premodern families an important strategy to restrict family size. The behavior of the families in Stollhamm was different. The women of Stollhamm in Ostfriesland married young. The average age was 22.7 years old. Based on a demographic analysis, Norden clarified the causes of this early marriage as a consequence of the existence of contraceptive behavior and extreme short marriage duration of 9.3 years on the average, due to the death of the wife (Norden, 1984, 138-164, especially 143).

Except for these villages, age of marriage in the German villages in my sample varied little: Between 27.8 and 30.8 years old for men (3.0 years), and between 23.9 and 28.5 years old for women (4.6 years). The age range in the Japanese villages for both men and women is more than twice as large as in the German case. New researches of German cities suggest that the age of marriage in German urban areas has also relatively standardized. (Kohl, 1985 for Trier; Rodel, 1985 for Mainz; Zschunke, 1984 for Oppenheim) Regional differences in the age of marriage in Germany were not so conspicuous.

But in the rate of illegitimate births, we can find considerable regional differences in Germany. Table 4 shows the ratio of illegitimate births to the total number of births by legitimization status in villages of Germany between 1700 and 1899. During this period, two villages of Waldeck had the highest illegitimacy rate. Ostfriesland (East Friesland) was characterized by one of the lowest rates of illegitimacy of any region in the country. And it is evident in Germany that regional variations in illegitimacy rates are considerable and persistent (Knodel, 1988, 195).

The trend in illegitimacy from 1575 to 1850 in Butjadingen, a region in Ostfriesland in comparison with English and French regions, is shown in Figure 2. As mentioned above, the illegitimate birth rate in Ostfriesland was especially low in the later half of the nineteenth century. But from Figure 2 it is clear that the rate at the end of the sixteenth century was not so low. The first period, which

Table 4 Illegitimate births as percent of total births by legitimization status and village in Germany 1700-1899

Province	1 Northern Ostfriesland	2 Central Waldeck	Waldeck	3 Southern Wuerttemberg	Baden	Baden
Village	Middels	Braunsen	Massenhausen	Oeschelbronn	Rust	Kappel
All illegitimate	2.1	11.3	14.5	7.9	8.7	5.2
Non-legitimized	1.4	8.4	11.3	5.9	6.2	3.6
Legitimized	0.7	3.0	3.2	2.0	2.5	1.6

Note: Legitimized births refer to illegitimate births which are attributed to a couple who subsequently married.
Source: Knodel, 1988, 196.

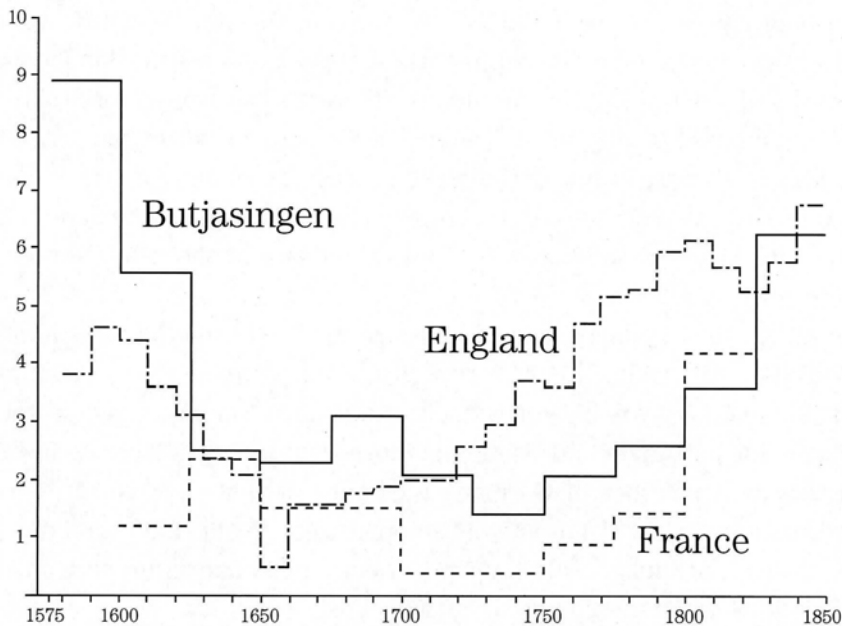


Fig. 2 Illegitimate birth rate Butjadingen in comparson with English and French Sourch: Norden, 1984, 167.

continued until about 1625, was characterized by a high number of illegitimate births. The numbers in Butjadingen were especially high. The second period shows continuously low illegitimacy rates. In England the second period was already over in the middle of the eighteenth century, in France and Butjadingen at about the end of that century. And during the third period, the rate of illegitimacy rose again (Norden, 1984, 166-168).

DISCUSSION

Inheritance customs and age of marriage in Japan and Germany

Concerning the two marriage patterns in Japan, Hayami argues as follows: 1. The degree of economic development cannot entirely explain the result, because western Japan was more prosperous and economically developed than eastern Japan until the end of the nineteenth century. 2. The degree of urbanization also cannot do it, because, "except for large urban centres like Tokyo, Osaka, and Kyoto, small and medium sized cities did not appear to have the expected rates". 3. Regional differences in age of marriage are related to "differences in the family cycle and in inheritance customs as well as to differences in the type of agricultural production and size of the farm" (Hayami, 1987, 70-71).

This argument insists that inheritance customs may be a decisive factor, which affected the differential age and rate of marriage in north-eastern, central and south-western Japan, and also that "the relationship between age of marriage and economic circumstances was one of mutual interactions, rather than a one-way process" (Hayami, 1987, 71).

The differential economic-demographic mechanisms between eastern and western Japan are explained as follows: "In the eastern part of Japan, primogeniture was more common. People married earlier and sons and their wives worked in the fields with their parents. Intensive labor in the relatively large fields was needed especially during the short working season. A more compressed family cycle (earlier marriage and earlier child-bearing) was, therefore, more suitable. By contrast, the western part of Japan contained a variety of inheritance customs, including ultimogeniture (inheritance by youngest son), and non-sex-selective inheritance. Consequently, people did not need to marry quickly. Heads of households wished to hold on their authority as long as possible, because their landholdings were more valuable than in the eastern part" (Hayami, 1987, 71; Hayami and Ochiai, 1996; Hamano, 1996).

Inheritance rules and strategies are, compared to other socio-economic and politico-institutional factors, important to the decision of marriage timing. But the marital behavior in Germany, and also in Europe, differs from the Japanese case as mentioned above. In German villages, where the farmer regularly practiced impartible inheritance and retired when his heir got married, the older generation will have an interest to delay the inheritance. In villages where the farms were divided among the children, the division of the property also began with the marriage of the children, but stretched often for a long time and was not over until the death of the last parent. Under such circumstances parents of property could control this process better if their children got married earlier. Therefore they had a chance to control the young family for a longer time (Schlumbohm, 1994b,

211).

Indeed a certain relationship existed between the regional inheritance patterns and the social practice of men's age at marriage. On the average the farmers of the villages in Baden got married earlier than proletarians due to the practice of partible inheritance. In the Bavarian villages, where the impartible inheritance was practiced, the farmer entered later in marital unions than proletarians. But in other territories, where impartible inheritance of farm possession was also dominant, there was no connection between marriage age and inheritance custom, such as in the villages in Waldeck and Ostfriesland. The co-relation was never perfect. Schlumbohm therefore stresses the importance of total regional socio-economic system, which determined the marriage strategy of the people, therefore the age of marriage (Schlumbohm, 1944b, 211-212).

Regional diversity of illegitimacy and standardized late marriage in Germany

Both Catholic and Protestant Churches made various attempts to establish norms. Various control and punishment systems developed in Germany, often in association with political institutions of state, city or other local governments. The Church recorded illegitimacy. Regional differences in institutions were considerable (Schell, 1918/19; Beck, 1983). The period from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century is called the period of "Confessionalization" and is regarded as a formative period for regional differences in the religious and political institutions of Germany (Schilling, 1988). And I suppose that the regional diversity of the rate of illegitimacy was determined during this period.

Institutional elements also supported late marriage in Germany. Late marriage was determined by two factors: 1. marriage occurred only when the economic independence of the new household was guaranteed, and 2. custom of apprenticeship delayed the age of marriage for both men and women (Haynal, 1965; Haynal, 1983; Saito, 1985, 105/174). Especially the former factor promoted legal restrictions in German states and the various secular and religious localities within particular states: 1. general restriction of marriage of the poor (Schell, 1918/19, 246-255; Murayama, 1990, 254-255), 2. legal regulations limiting the rights of residents of other regions or towns to settle within a territory (Zschunke, 1984, 175) and 3. other legal regulations concerning age of marriage, for example, with regard to military duty, restriction on marriage of men under 24 (Kohl, 1985, 150-151). These marriage restrictions were not uniform in Germany, but the impact of these restrictive laws "would be expected to lead to an increase in the age of marriage" (Knodel, 1988, 124).

The late marriage was common but not the ideal marriage in Germany. The Lutheran Church, for example, recommended a marriage age, for men between

22 and 24, and for women between 18 and 22 (Zschunke, 1984, 175). But the ideal marriage age was not observed because economic and individual independence was more important. Individual independence was a virtue of the Christian religion since the Middle Age (Macfarlane, 1987; Mitterauer, 1990). A couple who wished to marry or settle in a community had to “produce evidence of sufficient wealth or property, a secure income, or assured stable employment opportunities, in order to allay doubts about their ability to support their children” (Knodel, 1988, 124). Marriage was not only a private matter, but concerned communal and state institutions.

CONCLUSION

In pre-modern Japan, regional differences in inheritance customs, in interaction with an economic and demographic system, determined the regional diversity. Early marriage in north-eastern Japan and late marriage in central and south-western Japan were the results of this interaction system. Regional difference of inheritance customs was in this sense a decisive factor for the age of marriage.

By contrast, in pre-modern Germany, the inheritance customs were only one of several decisive factors within a regional economic and demographic system. The age of marriage in Germany also had a regional diversity, but in comparison with Japan, it was standardized within the European marriage pattern. This standardization was a historical consequence of the institutionalization of the official demands of individual economic independence, which was propagated into the European family relationship since the Middle Age, through the Christian religion, and also supported by laws of state and local administrative institutions. This institutionalized system of norms interacted with the regional economic and demographic system, in which the marriage pattern was included (See Figure 3).

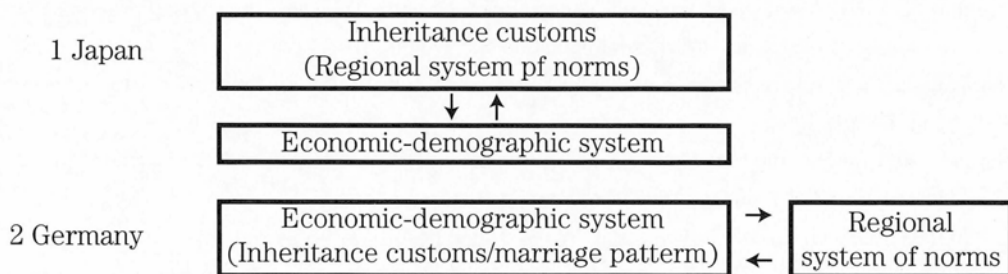


Fig. 3 Inheritance customs and system of norms in pre-modern Japan and Germany

The dual structure model calls our attention to the extreme long-time surviving of the regional customs in Japan, but such structural qualities are changing today. By contrast, German regionalism, due to another social dual structure, seems to be a historic-institutional one, established in the pre-modern age, and survives as a regional identity. This hypothesis will be carefully examined in the future, especially in regard with Japanese system of norms vs. behavior in comparison with the German case.

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